

Analysis of the Pentacle of Solomon

By

Frater Mordecai Shia

After seeing a mass produced necklace variant of the Pentacle of Solomon (along with a slew of other pentacles) in a local Magick supplies shop, it struck me that these were a waste of money. Wrong materials, mass produced manufacturing process unrelated to proper construction times, no consecration done, etc. Basically an item made for an unsuspecting dabbler in the occult to raise a quick buck for the manufacturer and shop owner.

Upon further reflection however, I also realized my issues went deeper than that. That my dislike for the construction of the central area of this commercial pentacle lead to an even more complex mystery. Realizing the drawing used to produce these was based on one of many of many versions and variations I've seen, the quandary came to mind then, what was the relationship between all of them? Had the symbolism construction evolved over time, or had it simply suffered and mutated from translation to translation? Could all these versions be used to unlock deeper meaning and understanding?

With that, I resounded to write down my exploration and analysis for the benefit of my fellow fraters and sorors. Hopefully it will aid them in their own further research, whether or not they agree or disagree with some of the conclusions I've drawn.

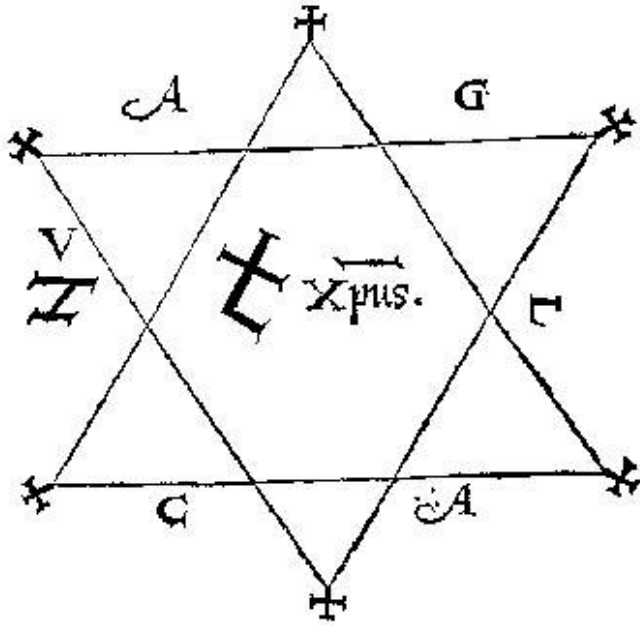
To being with, here we have a version contained in several modern books and now mass produced for sale. The central area in question states Expus:



Expus as a full word is Romanian for "On Display" or "open" (as in to display to the "world"), and Romanian itself is descended from what's termed as Vulgar Latin (as opposed to Classical Latin). An intriguing connection, since it is describing what you do with this pentacle. Quite often in grimoires though, wording is included in drawings that

are meant to convey usage and construction and not necessarily part of the item to be drawn. Keeping the meaning of Expus and this fact in mind, as a whole it seemed to be lacking when compared with the existence of other pentacles with more detailed central areas. The Hebrew letterings were also done incorrectly from a formation standpoint (further obfuscating possible comparison research as demonstrated towards the end of this writing).

Here we have another version, this one showing the letter E now forming a tilted sigil and a separate word “Xpus”:



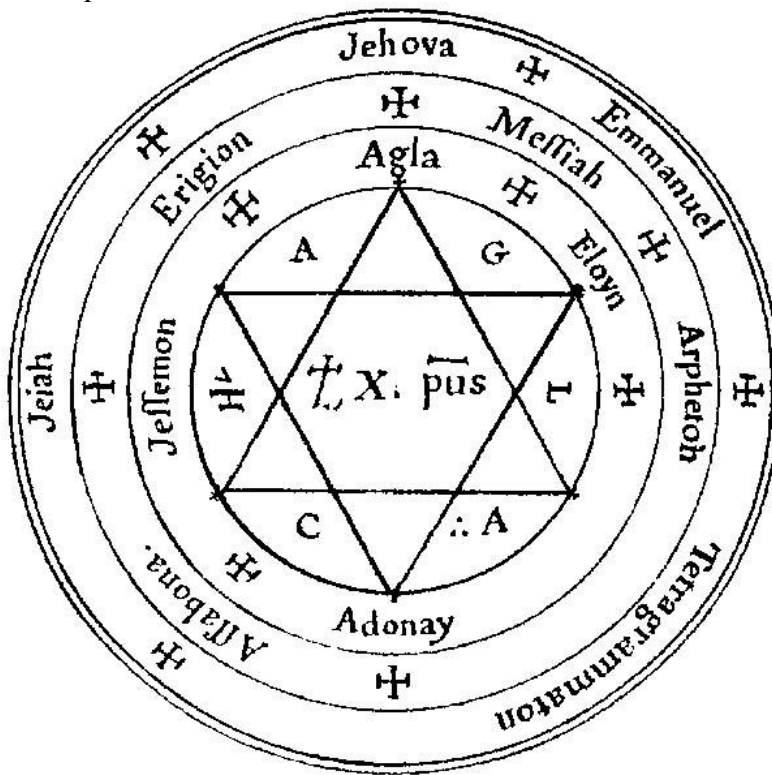
From *Heptameron* by Peter De Abano, Lyon 1600.

The interesting connection here (suggested by Joseph Peterson) is that words like Xpus were often used as a medieval shorthand for Christ (Christus), such as this listing presented here:

<http://www.hist.msu.ru/Departments/Medieval/Cappelli/CPLLI402.HTM>

This is of course something one would expect to be calling on given the context of the translation and time period. However it begs the question then if this is yet another layer of contextual relationship laid on to the drawing, since this version appears to replace all Hebrew with Latin letters.

We now move on to another version, which does similarly but attempts to keep translations of the Hebrew words. Here now we have the X clearly separated and “pus” as a separate word:



French version of:
The Veritable Clavicles of Solomon,
Translated from Hebrew into the Latin Language by Rabbi Abognazar.

On further research, Pus (with the line above the u, which would explain the line above the word that is alternately small or long depending on the source version) is a Latin word for "designation of a malicious person":

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0059%3Aentry%3D%2339660>

This presents yet another instance of what the pentacle is intended for, but not necessarily anything other than a descriptive term rather than an actual part. Interestingly, the separation (completed with a hexagram centered dot) of the “sigil” with

“X” and the Latin word “pus” calls attention then to X and the “sigil” for more possible clues.

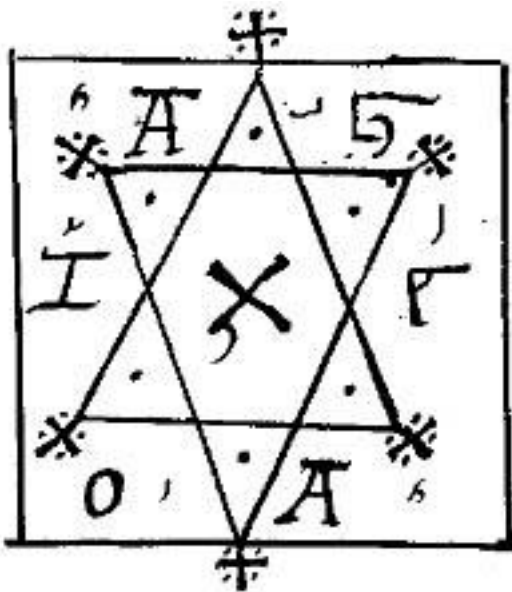
When focusing on the “sigil” for more clues, we notice it has been moved vertical to more resemble an L. Upon further comparison, you’ll notice that the “L” is actually the symbol for Saturn:



(left) Symbol for Saturn taken from John Dee’s Alchemists Egg, *Monas Hieroglyphica*. (Right) symbol taken from previous pentacle.

This clue is important, but in hindsight its not surprising. The various pentacles of Saturn are used in the realm of spirit/entity control, so it would make sense to see a symbol for Saturn show up.

Finally, this brings us to a “Hebrew” version of the pentacle from the Sepher Mafteah Shelomoh presented below:



Sepher Mafteah Shelomoh (Key of Solomon),
Facsimile and Reproduction by
Hermann Gollancz, M.A., D. Lit.
Goldsmid Professor of Hebrew,
University College, London.
1914

I say “Hebrew” in quotes because it also contains non-Hebrew letters surrounding the hexagram. What is immediately interesting on the surrounding characters is that they differ by one with the other versions: O instead of C in the lower left corner. Since the others are obvious in their translation (AGLA = Aleph, Gimel, Lamed, Aleph, which is short for Atah Gibor Leolam Adonia or “The Lord Is Mighty Forever”, and I = Yud), one has to center in on the “O” as another translation attempt. In this case, there is no direct “O” sounding letter in the Hebrew alphabet, but the letter Vav can take on this characteristic with the proper vowel – something that would not have been obvious to outside translators (such as authors that have mistranslated yud hey vuv hey as Yahweh or Jehovah) but would be to a Hebrew speaking one. So these could be abbreviations to yet another phrase, but that is for another writing, as we are mainly interested in the central area for this article.

This “Hebrew” version gives the most intriguing insight in to the meaning of the center of this pentacle. With a hexagram similar in ornamentation to the others and a complete absence of the other descriptives in the middle, it also begs the question of a Hebrew connection in the middle - in this case a single Hebrew letter. To understand its significance, we need to take a look at a more commonly accessible Kabbalistic talisman.

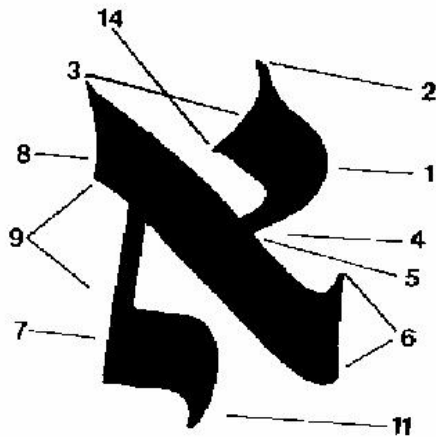
It’s a Jewish tradition to “inscribe” the glory of god on the doorpost as a sign of love of god. Honored in the form of a parchment scroll with a prayer of glory called the Shema (called a Mezuzah), it is placed in a case that usually includes the Hebrew letter Shin on its face:



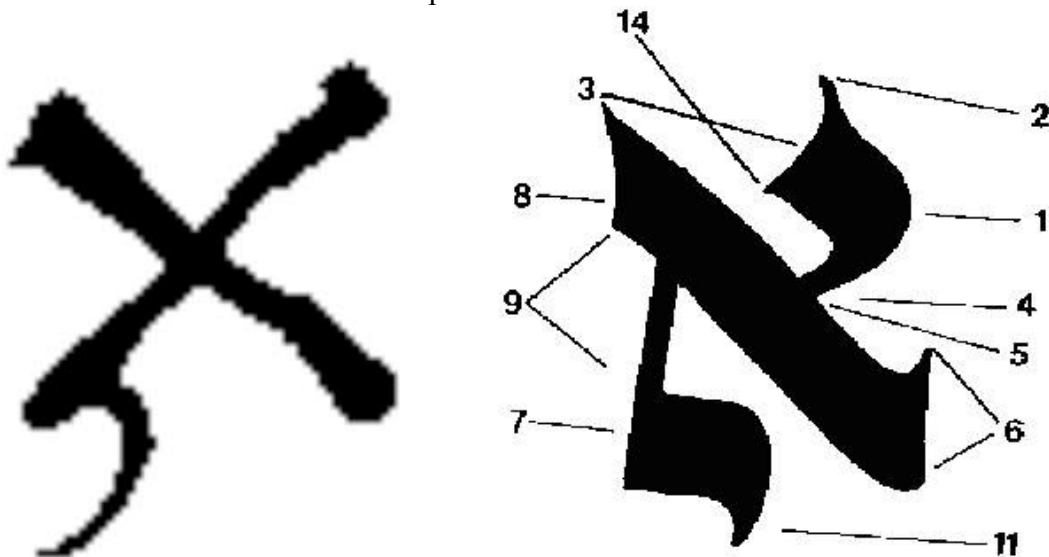
The Shin is short for Shaddai (a Kabbalistic word) which itself is short for Shomer Daltot Yisrael or “Guardian of the Doorways of Israel”. This further breaks to a deeper Kabbalistic meaning when it’s realized Israel (Is – person, Ra – Vision, El – god) itself refers to “Seers of God”, as in someone who has seen the face of god in the Gnostic/Mystic sense. This word (as well as three other Kabbalistic names of god) are also written on the back of the parchment. Furthermore, Kabbalistically the Mezuzah functions as an amulet or talisman, protecting those who dwell within (whether coming or

going – often the prayer "May God protect my going out and coming in, now and forever" is said, accompanied by kissing of the fingers and touching of the Mezuzah).

What does this have to do with the “sigil” in the pentacle? It gives us a good lead at its original intent and composition when compared this other well known talisman. Following this lead, here we have the biblical Hebrew rendition of the letter Aleph:



And what follows is the direction comparison between the Hebrew pentacle mystery letter and the biblical rendition of Aleph:



The similarities are almost too much to ignore, down to the lower flair (Aleph is traditionally composed of an upper and lower “Yod” and a middle “Vuv”). What significance would this have? Aleph is king over breath and Air. (Insert meaning of Air in elements, relates to god, etc.). According to the Sefer Yetzirah, Aleph serves as a separator between the upper and lower worlds (hence the upper and lower Yod separated by a Vuv). Furthermore, Aleph is the first letter of the supreme name for god “אל” or “El” as well as the phrase “היה ראש היה” (Ehye 'Asher 'Ehye) or “I am that I am”.

Giving these contexts, it seems most fitting that Aleph is a possible actual answer to the mystery of the central area of Solomon's Pentacle.